

# 1. Introduction

## A. Background and Purpose

### Growth Management and Neighborhood Planning

Since early 1995, neighborhoods throughout Seattle have been engaged in efforts to plan for their communities' growth *over the* next twenty years. These neighborhood planning efforts represent an innovative, grass-roots approach to growth management that supports neighborhood residents, business owners, and other community members in planning for their own future.

Seattle's neighborhood planning program stemmed from the state's Growth Management Act (GMA), passed by the state legislature in 1990. The GMA required Washington communities *to* prepare twenty-year comprehensive plans for their growth. In response to this mandate, the City created *Seattle's Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, commonly referred to as the Comp Plan. Adopted by the Seattle City Council in 1994, the citywide Comp Plan proposed to concentrate future growth within the city's existing neighborhoods. The Comp Plan established guidelines for neighborhoods to develop their own plans to allow growth in ways that provide for a neighborhood's unique character, needs, and livability.

### Urban Villages and Urban Centers

A basic tenet of the Comp Plan is a proposal to concentrate future growth in areas of Seattle designated as either "urban villages" or "urban centers." Urban villages are the commercial and residential cores of historically distinct neighborhoods. Wallingford, Columbia City, and West Seattle Junction are examples of urban villages.

Urban centers are larger districts that sometimes encompass several urban villages. There are five urban centers in Seattle (1) First Hill/Capitol Hill, (2) Downtown Seattle, (3) Seattle Center, (4) University Community, and (5) Northgate. The Comp Plan calls for urban centers to develop as the densest areas of the city. It proposes growth targets for urban centers in the areas of housing, employment, and open space. Urban centers are intended to be pedestrian-oriented communities with direct access to regional high-capacity transit.

The University Community Urban Center (UCUC) includes two urban villages—the University District NW Urban Village and the Ravenna Urban Village—as well as the University of Washington (UW).

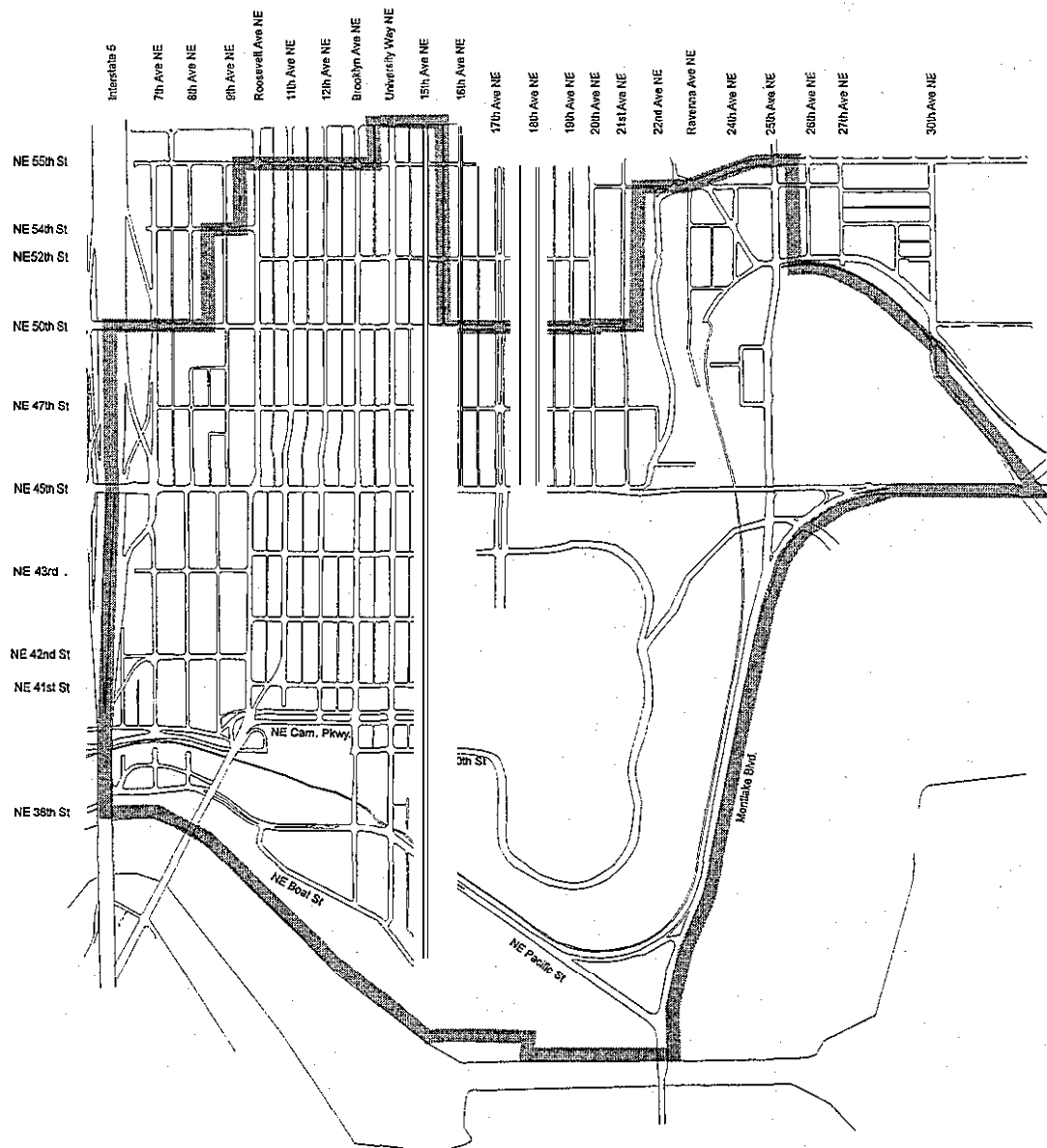


Figure I-1: University Community Urban Center Boundaries

According to growth targets predicted by *Seattle's Comprehensive Plan*, the UCUC is expected to gain 2,110 housing units and 8,500 new jobs by the year 2014. This document represents the community's objectives and priorities for meeting those growth targets while enhancing the UCUC's unique character and livability. Beyond meeting growth management and Comp Phm objectives, the Urban Center Plan presents an exceptional opportunity for the community to define its vision for the future and actions to carry itself forward into the 21 st Century.

This UCUC neighborhood plan will be submitted to the City Council for adoption in September 1998. The adopted neighborhood plan will guide future city policies and the allocation of resources for capital improvements in the UCUC neighborhood.

## **B. Process**

### **The Neighborhood Planning Office**

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In 1995, the Seattle Neighborhood Planning Office (NPO) was established as a temporary executive office of the City charged with assisting 37 individual neighborhoods with conducting neighborhood planning processes that satisfy the requirements of the Comp Plan. The UCUC neighborhood planning project was the pilot project of the NPO program. Over a three-year period (spring 1995 through spring 1998), the UCUC planning process involved over 1,000 residents, business owners, and other community members in planning for the community's growth over the next twenty years. Working with a \$350,000 Phase 11 planning grant from the City, UCUC community members directed a two-phase neighborhood planning process with assistance from consultants and NPO staff.

### **Phase I**

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During Phase I of the project, a volunteer Organizing Committee guided outreach efforts within the community. Phase I began in 1995 with a series of community-wide events and small group conversations. Community members organized themselves into the University Community Urban Center Association (UCUCA) and drafted a vision statement in December 1995. Phase I culminated in a lively town meeting, which was attended by over 125 people. Outreach was aimed at:

- . Educating community members about neighborhood planning and growth management
- Involving community members in the UCUC'S neighborhood planning process
- . Airing people's concerns and issues
- . Beginning to build a consensus of support for the neighborhood plan

From this work, the UCUCA distilled a set of issues and initiatives to be developed in Phase II.

### **Phase II**

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Phase II of the planning effort, which focused on technical planning as well as continued outreach efforts, was directed by an appointed citizen Planning Committee. Some members of the Planning Committee were representatives of various organizations and some were elected at large. While the Planning Committee served as the main review and decision-making body, five Satellite Committees, comprised of volunteers assisted by consultants, formed to develop elements of the neighborhood plan. These elements included:

- . Jobs and Economic Vitality
- . Transportation
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- . Open Space and Public Amenities
- Public Safety and Social Services.



**Figure 1-2: Planning Committee Members Study the Relationship Between Growth Projections, Developable Land Capacity, and Community Vision.**

During Phase II, the UCUCA invited residents, property owners, businesses and institutions to eight major public discussions of future possibilities for this neighborhood., UCUCA rdso held more than 60 committee discussions on specific interest areas open to anyone who wished to attend, as were the regularly monthly meetings of the Planning Committee and the Coordinating Committee. These” events and meetings were publicized in regular editions of the UCUCA *Neighborhood Planning News*, which was mailed to residents, property owners, and businesses in the community. Newsletters were also distributed via libraries, community centers, and NPO staff. Lawrence McGuire in the Office of Neighborhood Planning posted regular meeting dates in the NPO Monthly Calendar and announced future special events in a variety of publications. Ongoing efforts to inform and attract citizens rdso have included a telephone hot line, a booth at the annual Street Fair, a web page, individual invitations delivered door-to-door, flyers distributed and posted at neighborhood locations as well as press, radio, and cable television announcements. Typical events during this period included:

- **UW Conversations:** President **Richard J. McCormick** met with 60+ people at **University Heights** in March 1997. His remarks emphasized the University’s support for efforts to improve **The Ave**. He also expressed interest in future discussions of how **UW planning** will affect the community in terms of housing and potential locations for **University-related** research. Subsequently, Planning Committee representatives met with the Faculty Council on University Relations on several occasions to pursue these questions.
- **Alternatives Workshop:** The challenges of planning became concrete and specific at a community workshop in April 1997. The task for the evening—distributing game pieces representing new housing, **offices**, and **amenities** on a map of the area—was difficult. Some groups were able *to* agree on places where they would like to see specific kinds of development. Others found the challenge overwhelming. The **need** to clarify alternatives became apparent.

- **Economic Forum:** A half-day workshop in May, featured economist Ben Frerichs, who had analyzed jobs and economic vitality in the University Community. Other viewpoints on future possibilities were provided by Weldon Ihrig, UW Executive Vice President; Bob Filley, Director of the Center for Community Development and Real Estate; Maria Barrientos, Bruce Lorig Inc., Project Manager for the Commodore Duchess renovation Janet Bayne, University Village Manager; and Fred Hart, LaTienda owner. Roundtable discussions followed.



**Figure 1-3: Community Members Expressing Themselves at Public Open House**

- **Neighborhood Updates:** This effort was integrated with scheduled meetings of the University District Community Council, University Park, and Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance. The discussions focused on the choices that lie ahead with the help of detailed maps showing areas with potential for redevelopment. Questions from people who attended included: “What is the height limit on Roosevelt?” “How much new housing will be for families?” and, “what’s the incentive for developers to follow design guidelines?”
- **Business Update:** This morning discussion drew more than 40 representatives of the University District Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement Association, property owners, and the University of Washington. Topics of concern included the

long-range health of The Ave, questions about development options in the area, recommendations for encouraging family and market rate housing, and suggestions for strengthening economic vitality.

- **Spring Community Forum:** Publicity focused attention on this community-wide meeting that attracted more than 90 participants. The purpose was to show what committees have been working on and collect recommendations for topics to be studied further. The first half allowed individuals the opportunity to review displays on specific topics and ask questions. Next, committee members explained the possibilities in each topic area in more detail. Finally, everyone was invited to provide comments on the proposals and to register their priorities.
- **Ravenna Urban Village Workshops:** During late spring 1997 and throughout the summer, area-specific workshops were planned and conducted by citizens in the Ravenna Urban Village. These well-attended meetings produced agreements about the priorities for this community. The topics for discussion were based on the results of detailed written surveys distributed to all residents and businesses within this area.
- **Fall Community Forum:** A lively mailer designed to inform all 30,000 households and businesses about neighborhood planning and the importance of attending the Fall Community Forum was mailed in late September. The publication focused on the need for people to contribute their ideas and recommendations to the Planning Committee regarding specific directions and alternatives. A poster advertising the event was posted in businesses and public gathering spots throughout the district. Articles describing the work to date appeared in *University Week* and other local publications.

From 9 a.m. on October 21 until 10 p.m. that evening, the University Branch of the Seattle Public Library was the site of a series of meetings focused on defining the future for this community. A series of detailed displays depicted the progress of planning to date. Well-attended interest group discussions of 1.5 to 1 hours each were held throughout the day. Each focused on a topic of concern to a particular audience, including arts and cultural affairs, nonprofit, seniors, business and major employers. More than 125 people attended the evening session and participated in the discussion which followed a slide presentation illustrating the major recommendations developed to date. Participants voted on their preferences, and the results were used to rank and prioritize specific recommendations. A summary of the evening's results was prepared and distributed via the University Community Urban Center's newsletter. The mailing was sent to more than 1,000 recipients.

- **Zoning Workshop:** A special opportunity for local residents and interested citizens to review and comment on proposed zoning changes. The workshop was advertised by a targeted mailer to all property owners within 300 feet of any rezone. The workshop, held on June 14, 1998, was attended by 47 participants, who were presented a brief explanation of proposed changes and given the opportunity to comment as individuals and discuss proposals in small groups.
- **Validation Workshop:** The culmination of the public participation process. On June 18, 1998, the Planning Committee presented the plan proposals to the community for final comments. The event was publicized by a mailer sent to all members of the community and was attended by 83 persons. Comments were compiled for Planning Committee consideration during the final decision making.